

## BETTER COMPREHENSION: NEED FOR VOCABULARY LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT

Vocabulary plays an important role in using a language. For the selection of appropriate word in the appropriate situation with proper stress and intonation is very essential for effective use of language. Present study investigated whether knowledge in second language vocabulary has any effect on achievement and reading comprehension in second language. Study was conducted on a sample of 200 secondary school students. A vocabulary test and reading comprehension test were administered and score of achievement was taken from school records for the purpose. One way analysis of variance was used for analyzing the data and the result revealed that there existed significant effect of vocabulary knowledge on achievement and reading comprehension of second language.

### INTRODUCTION

Language is the most sophisticated and creative instrument invented by human mind. Language is more than the apparently simple stream of sound that flows from the tongue of native speaker. It is a complex system of communication with various levels of complexity involving intricate selection and ordering of meanings, sound and larger units and arrangements. As there is no language without sounds, there is no language without words. English one among the international languages is selected in India as the second language. In order to benefit from English language, proper ways, means, techniques, methods and practices have to be provided. The most important fact to be considered is the learner and the factors that influence the learner in second language learning. According to Krashan (1982) there are two ways for foreign language learning, one may acquire it or may learn it. Essentially we acquire a foreign language as we engage in meaningful interaction with no attention to form. We learn on the other hand via a conscious process of study and attends to form and error correction, most typically in formal language classroom.

The growth of performing an increasing variety of language experiences is paralleled by growth in the component abilities and skills and development of vocabulary and in the use of sentences. As a significant building is erected by laying the brick over the previous one, words are the units of language that gain paramount importance. There are extensive research indicating that a rich vocabulary is a critical element in vitalizing writing and reading skill. Recent researches have identified vocabulary

knowledge as the single most important factor in reading comprehension. Vocabulary knowledge or lexical knowledge is all the words one knows in a particular language. According to Lado (1964) knowing words in reading is also a very different level of mastery than knowing words so as to speak. A passive reading vocabulary is needed for comprehending a given written material. It is now fully recognized that vocabulary is one of the most important component in second language acquisition.

### **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE**

Learning vocabulary is a neglected area to some extent. But it is evident from different studies conducted that vocabulary is very essential for achieving competency in second language. For comprehending what we hear and what we read we should have an abundant knowledge of vocabulary, otherwise, only a part of what is intended will be understood. Study conducted by Leki and Carson (1994) found that learners ranked vocabulary as the most important factor in academic writing and claimed that vocabulary expansion is the key element needed to their writing performance. Beimuller (2003) noted that vocabulary has long been recognized as a strong determinant of reading success. Lubliner and Smetana (2005) examined the effect of a multifaceted metacognitive intervention on reading comprehension and vocabulary achievement. Result revealed that there existed significant difference before and after the intervention. Another study conducted by Zyzik (2011) revealed that prior lexical knowledge had significant effect on second language idiom learning.

Investigator wanted to explore the effect of vocabulary knowledge on reading comprehension and Achievement in second language. Both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge should be improved for better learning and acquisition of second language. For this an awareness about the areas affecting the vocabulary knowledge should be identified and influence of vocabulary on various aspects of language learning should be explored. Without good reading comprehension a second language learner is not able to understand the meanings conveyed in the given written material completely. Moreover listening comprehension also is very much influenced by the lexical knowledge.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To study the effect of knowledge in English vocabulary on achievement in English for the total sample.
- To study the effect of knowledge in English vocabulary on reading comprehension in English for the total sample.

## **HYPOTHESES**

- There exists significant effect of knowledge in English vocabulary on Achievement in English of secondary school students for total sample.
- There exists significant effect of knowledge in English vocabulary on reading comprehension in English of secondary school students for total sample.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample**

For the present study sample was collected from the population of secondary school students of Kerala. Sample consisted of 200 students.

### **Tools**

#### **1) English Vocabulary Test (Meera and Praseeda, 2008)**

Test consisted of 38 items with recognition type multiple choice items and production type multiple choice items. Each correct response was given 1 score and incorrect response was given 0 score. Face validity and content validity was established and reliability coefficient obtained through test retest method is 0.76.

#### **2) Comprehension Test in English (Praseeda, 2013)**

Test consisted of 25 items. 5 reading passages with 5 question each. Fully correct items was given 2 score, partially correct item was given 1 score and incorrect item was given 0 score. Items to identify meaning of words, items to understand meaning of sentence and one word answer type questions were included. Face validity and content validity was established and reliability coefficient of 0.71 was obtained through test retest method.

#### **3) Achievement Test**

The score of annual examination conducted in school was used as the achievement score.

## **PROCEDURE**

The English Vocabulary Test and reading Comprehension test was administered on secondary school students. The Achievement in English of the same students were taken from the school records. The data obtained were subjected to statistical analysis. One way Analysis of variance was used as

statistical technique. For the purpose of analysis, total sample was divided into three groups based on Vocabulary using mean and S.D. The procedure of  $\pm \sigma$  distance from mean is used. So students having score  $M+\sigma$  were treated as High Vocabulary group and students have score  $M-\sigma$  were treated as Low Vocabulary group and student having score between  $M+\sigma$  and  $M-\sigma$  was considered as having Average Vocabulary.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result of ANOVA undertaken for examining the effect of vocabulary on Achievement and Reading Comprehension is presented in the following tables.

**TABLE 1**

**Summary of ANOVA for Effect of Vocabulary on Achievement**

Sample	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-value	Level of Significance
200	Between group	1609.54	2	804.77	6.58	0.01
	Within group	24092.20	197	122.29		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>25701.75</b>	<b>199</b>			

From the result it is found that knowledge in vocabulary has significant effect on Achievement in English for the total sample.

As the F-ratio is found significant further analysis is conducted to know which groups differ significantly. Hence multiple comparison procedure- Scedheffe's test of multiple comparison was employed.

**TABLE 2**  
**Summary of Post Hoc Analysis**

(I) Level	(J) Level	Mean diff	St Er	Sig	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
L	A	-0.771	2.215	0.941	-6.23	4.69
	H	-7.552*	2.619	0.017	-14.01	-1.09
A	L	0.771	2.215	0.941	-4.69	6.23
	H	-6.782*	1.968	0.003	-11.64	-1.93
H	L	7.552*	2.619	0.017	1.09	14.01
	A	6.782*	1.968	0.003	1.93	11.64

*A- Average Vocabulary Group; L: Low Vocabulary Group; H: High Vocabulary Group*

*\* indicates 0.05 level of significance*

From the result, it is clear that for total sample group with low vocabulary and high vocabulary differ in their achievement slightly and group with High Vocabulary and Average Vocabulary slightly differ in their achievement.

**TABLE 3**  
**Summary of ANOVA for**  
**Effect of Vocabulary on Reading Comprehension**

Sample	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-value	Level of Significance
200	Between group	4483.27	2	2241.60	24.49	0.01
	Within group	18026.30	197	91.50		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>22509.58</b>	<b>199</b>			

Here also result revealed that knowledge in vocabulary has significant effect on reading comprehension.

Post Hoc analysis was conducted to understand the group difference. The result of Scheffe's multiple comparison given in Table 4.

**TABLE 4**  
**Summary of Post Hoc Analysis**

(I) Level	(J) Level	Mean diff	St Er	Sig	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
L	A	-11.242**	1.916	000	-15.97	-6.52
	H	-15.377**	2.265	000	-20.96	-9.78
A	L	11.242**	1.916	000	6.52	15.97
	H	-4.135	1.703	0.055	-8.53	0.06
H	L	15.377**	2.265	.000	9.79	20.96
	A	4.135	1.703	0.055	0.06	8.33

*A- Average Vocabulary Group; L: Low Vocabulary Group; H: High Vocabulary Group*

*\* indicates 0.05 level of significance, \*\* indicates 0.01 level of significance*

From the result it is evident that for total sample group with low vocabulary and high vocabulary differ significantly in their comprehension and group with Average vocabulary and low vocabulary differ significantly in their Reading Comprehension.

## CONCLUSION AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION

From the study it was found that knowledge in second language vocabulary help the students in their achievement and reading comprehension in English. A reader cannot understand a text without knowing what most of the words mean. Students learn most of the words indirectly, through everyday experience with oral and written language and other words are learned through carefully designed instruction. Lack of vocabulary knowledge is already an obvious and serious obstacle for many students. Such a situation will create an increasing number of students who are considered educationally at risk. Knowledge explosion is now creating an ever larger pool of concepts and words and one is forced to master these words to be literate and employable. Considering, secondary school students who already past the initial stages of reading is now in want of new words and not just recognition of what already is

part of their vocabulary. So in schools especially in second language classrooms more importance should be given to vocabulary learning. Teacher can make use of different innovative methods suitable in their classroom for providing better acquisition and learning of vocabulary there by improving better use of language.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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